

## BOOK REVIEW

HOBBS, CHRISTOPHER. 1995. **Medicinal Mushrooms, An Exploration of Tradition, Healing, and Culture.** (Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 95-60381, pbk, 2nd ed.). Botanica Press, 10226 Empire Grade, Santa Cruz, CA 95060, \$16.95, 251 pp, 30 color photos.

This book is carefully documented through literature sources that are discussed at the very beginning in a section entitled Sources, Historical and Scientific. This lays the groundwork for the 39 page Fungi Bibliography (900 literature sources) that is a comprehensive array of literature that traces medicinal mushrooms from the ancients to presentday. Hobbs notes that the text is divided into two parts: the first focuses on a general overview of the fungi, summarizes the history and use of medicinal fungi and gives practical instructions on how to use them. The second part is detailed and more technical, covering botany, chemistry, pharmacology, clinical studies, indications, and dosages of medicinal fungi commonly available in the United States, Asia and Europe and other parts of the world.

History of Use is a chapter packed with detailed information of medicinal uses of fungi in Western Medicine (ancient Greek writers, the herbalists, native American Indians) and uses in Asia. There is also a discussion of the origin of the words mushroom, fungus, and agaric that merit careful perusal. The chapters on Modern Uses Of Medicinal Fungi, Adaptogens and Immune Stimulants, and a Guide To Using Medicinal Fungi contain valuable information on certain species of fungi that can enhance a healthful state.

A Guide to Using Medicinal Fungi tells how to gather medicinal mushrooms, how to store them, how to prepare powdered extracts, powders, and pills, how to make teas and soups, and how to prepare tinctures and doses. Nutritional Value of Fungi (5 pages) and recipes (4 pages) discusses the nutrient content of edible and medicinal fungi.

Medicinal Fungi Monographs is devoted to 27 species of fungi. These species are discussed under the following headings: species name and author, common name, synonyms, other common names, description and habitat, range, history, chemistry, pharmacology, human clinical studies, toxicity, uses in traditional medicine, medical uses, preparation and dosage, related species, and procurement. There is a handy table entitled Overview of all Medicinal Mushroom Species that collates much of the previous information into a more simplified and retrievable tabular form. There is a short glossary of 29 mostly medical terms. Resources gives the company name and address of mushroom products. The index is incomplete for many species and common names that appear in a number of places in the text.

The modest price, wealth of information carefully gleaned from a variety of excellent sources, and nontechnical narrative directed to a lay audience, make this book a valuable addition to the professional and amateur mushroom library. One of the best bargains available today.—*Harold W. Keller, Research Associate, BRIT.*